

# IRS returns need not be taxing

*Free service at Redstone aids many with necessary chore*

By **REBECCA SALLEE**

*For The Times*

This year's filing of IRS returns could be less taxing for active duty and retired military personnel in this area, thanks to a free service at Redstone Arsenal.

The Tax Assistance Center will begin making appointments on Wednesday for tax preparation services from Feb. 3 through April 15.

Capt. William Carpenter, officer in charge at the center, encourages everyone eligible to take advantage of the tax service. Volunteer personnel at the center are trained by the IRS with special knowledge about tax laws affecting military service members. And at no charge, the price is right.

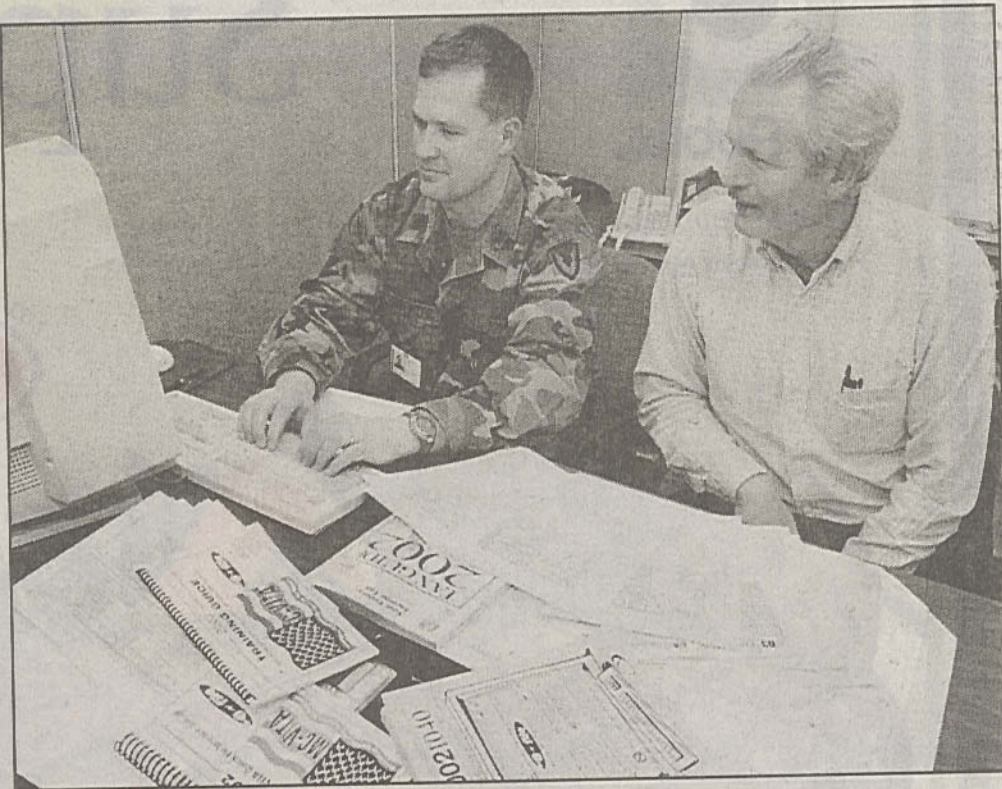
"We're providing all of the services for free, electronic filing as well," said Carpenter, adding that returns filed electronically should be processed within one week.

The arsenal's center last year provided \$185,000 in tax services, based on typical commercial fees.

"We prepared over 1,200 federal tax returns and over 1,300 state and local returns," said Carpenter. "The refunds recovered: \$1.3 million."

The arsenal center is part of an IRS-sponsored Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), whose "overall mission, if you will, is to provide quality income tax preparation to low and middle-income families at no charge," said Carpenter.

The arsenal center is not typical of other VITA programs because eligible patrons include those whose incomes don't fall into low or middle categories, such as retirees



Bob Gathany/Huntsville Times

**Capt. William Carpenter, left, of the Tax Assistance Center on Redstone Arsenal works with Randy Duff, a tax-aid program specialist with the AARP.**

who had second careers after leaving the military.

Tax center personnel will review tax returns on a case-by-case basis and reserve the right to refer people to commercial tax preparers if they deem it necessary. Those who own a business are encouraged to seek outside tax assistance, with the exception of child care givers who are certified by Red-

stone's Child and Youth Services.

Carpenter said his staff is keenly aware of changes in the tax laws that affect military service members, including changes in eligibility for earned income credit, among other issues.

For more information or to make an appointment, call this easy-to-remember number at the tax center: 842-1040.

## Living quarters for military still need work

*Effort to privatize moves slowly;  
60% of housing is not adequate*

**Military update**

units by borrowing against a guaranteed income stream from military renters. They also agree to maintain their properties.